



## Sammy Davis' Strange Visitor from the Distant Star Sirius

HOW HE AND WALT McDUGALL FOUND A WONDERFUL CREATURE WHO CAME FROM ANOTHER WORLD AND FELL IN LOVE WITH A BEAUTIFUL AMERICAN GIRL



CURLED UP LIKE A CHICKEN IN AN EGG, LAY A BEING THAT WAS LIKE A MAN, YET TOTALLY DIFFERENT

**S**AMMY DAVIS and I were out fishing in the Cove in Lake's Bay one day, when we decided to pull up the anchor and seek another spot. It was Sammy's duty to haul up the anchor while I started the engine, but the latter, for some reason of its own, refused to work, and in trying to discover the trouble I burned my fingers. Said Sammy:

"I did that 'other day, myself! It's a pity that we can't have asbestos fingers so that it wouldn't hurt, anyway, if we did burn them."

"In that case," I replied, "we would perhaps break them off or smash them, and never notice it until we'd lost them."

Just as I spoke something came whizzing down from the sky and darted into the water not far from us with a splash that sent the spray high in air. It looked like a projectile from a man-of-war, but as I knew there were no battleships anywhere about, I instantly concluded that somewhere on shore, or perhaps upon some steamer, an explosion had occurred that had sent a boiler or other contrivance high in air, and that we had narrowly escaped being sunk by it.

In a few seconds, much to my amazement, the dark object appeared on the surface and lay there, gently bobbing up and down on the waves, exactly like a buoy that marks the channel. In fact, I at once took it for a buoy, and wondered what could have sent such a thing flying through the air. As the anchor raised the engine slowly started, and we moved over beside the floating object, and we reached it I saw that something inside of it was causing it to bob and roll about.

It was shaped somewhat like a buoy, each end coming to a point, and was made of metal, but there was no ring to which a chain could be fastened with which to anchor it. Upon a close examination, although I admit I was a bit afraid that it was about to explode, for it moved very queerly, as if some sort of compound was working away inside of it, I saw that it was made exactly like the capsules in which we take medicine, one end fitting closely over the other.

"What do you suppose it is?" asked Sammy, as he leaned over and touched its shining side.

"It's some sort of a torpedo, I think," said I, "and I suspect it's loaded!"

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"Gee! Let's get away!" he cried in alarm. Just then the thing rolled clear over, and I saw that there was nothing attached to it at all; no steering gear, no wires, nothing that belonged to the deadly torpedo, and then I concluded to take it ashore; but when I tried to discover some way of fastening it to the Rambillicus, my launch, I found that to be impossible.

So, lifting one end, I endeavored to haul it into the boat, when to my amazement that end began to slide up, and in another moment it came off; and there in the cavity of the other half lay the most wonderful thing a man ever laid his eyes on!

Curled up like a chicken in an egg, lay a being that was like a man, yet totally different.

He fitted so perfectly into the metal casing that only his wonderful head showed, the rest of his body being packed tightly in the shell. His eyes were closed, but he was wriggling and squirming like an eel, which had caused the shell to roll, and

when the sunlight blazed down upon him he opened his eyes and looked up at us. He showed no surprise at all. After calmly gazing at us he spoke:

"Well! Here I am at last, and I am obliged to you for opening my caloea!"

"What is a caloea?" I asked.

He uncoiled an arm that looked like the leg of a spider-crab, and tapping the metal side of the shell, replied:

"This is a caloea; the thing in which I came from Sirius."

"Great Heavens!" I cried. "Do you mean to say that you came from the star Sirius? Is it possible?"

"That it's possible is proved by the fact, which you can't deny, that I, Scomanx, the son of Merki, am here in your presence, alive and kicking; that is, I'll be kicking just as soon as I can get my twelve arms and two legs out of this shell of cantimone. That's what we call this metal of which my caloea is made, and which is only produced in Sirius."

Thus speaking he began to loosen his arms, each pair being different, and as they waved in the air he stood up in the caloea and then clambered into the Rambillicus with a somewhat stiff action.

"I am pretty well cramped, for I've been in that thing nearly twenty-five of your little years! Never was quiet for longer than that in all my life before. But we mustn't allow the two halves of my caloea to escape, for I'll need that to take me home again."

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He reached out with two pair of arms and drew the metal caps abroad, then he did something to his eyes, after which he turned and looked at me.

His arms fascinated both Sammy and myself. The first pair were like crab's legs, only with small pincers that resembled a gas-fitter's pliers. Another pair had spoon-shaped ends, another resembled bird's claws, another were like the tentacles of the cuttle-fish, the fifth were simple hooks, while the sixth pair seemed somewhat like a man's, only there were six fingers on each hand and each finger was a sort of tool, such as a chisel, knife-blade, screw-driver, gimlet and the like, thus giving this wonderful creature the use of twelve implements.

Sammy, after eyeing this marvel a moment, cried:

"Gee! What a bunch of hands he's got!"

"Yes," said our guest. "Our people are well fitted out. I am amazed to see how poorly you are provided for. Only a pair of poor, fleshy, tender hands that seem to me like mere pulp. Don't you injure them every few minutes?"

"Yes, we have to be very careful," I replied; as I wondered how I'd look with twelve arms.

His legs were like two stout table-legs, and ended in a flat, round disk shaped like a big lily-pod, but his feet were made of a sort of horny material like tortoise-shell, transparent and shining. He stood on one foot like a stork to show the other to me.

"We can remove our feet," said he, "and attach others when we wish to swim or dance. And we have a sort of wheel-foot upon which one can roll along at the rate of forty miles an hour, or we can use a skate-foot on the ice. I can walk on the water with these feet, but it takes considerable practice."

"What did you do to your eyes?" asked Sammy, who had lost his fear already.

"Oh, I changed the focus, so that I could see better. You may not know that our eyes are adjustable, so that by simply turning them around in their sockets we can see microscopic objects distinctly, or a star a million miles away. Also, we can see through iron or wood quite as well."

"Golly! But won't he be useful on the boat?" cried Sammy. "He can look into the cylinder and tell us just what's the matter."

"Indeed that's easy!" said Scomanx. "I can tell you now that there is far too much oil inside of it. And she's very dirty, also. Ought to be scraped out. We use a simpler form of that same machinery to beat eggs with in Sirius. Make them of cantimone, same as this shell. It's a fine metal, but not good to eat."

"For goodness sake, you don't eat metals!" I gasped.

"Oh, yes; metals form the base of all our food and much of yours. All our nutritious foods are formed of chemically dissolved metals and other substances. I ate twenty-nine pounds of silver and eleven pounds of steel extract the day before I started, and I have a lot of pellets of concentrated aluminum and copper here in my side pouch."

He took from what seemed to be a wrinkle in his side a lot of shining bullets and swallowed several, smacking his lips afterward. His skin, for he wore no clothes, seemed to be leathery and hard, with irregular markings like that of an alligator's, and he had many little pockets in it. Along his back were horny plates, and the same were on his knees, elbows, the top of his head and the base of his spine. He was an armor-plated man indeed!

"Start your engine and let me see her go!" he said, and when the Rambillicus was moving rapidly he smiled and remarked:

"That is all right! She can go! But I'll show you before I leave you how to improve this machine so that fifty or sixty miles an hour will be nothing. I like it because it is so slow and easy. Even now I see a way to improve it."

He bent down, and with his twelve-tooled hands began to putter about the engine, and in a few minutes the boat darted forward twice as fast. He had bored a hole in the cylinder and attached a queer little brass knob to its side.

"Had that deducter in my pocket!" said he, with a chuckle. "It takes up all the recoil!"

"This is wonderful!" I cried.

"Pooh! That's nothing. There's another thing I can do, but I don't exactly remember what it is. Your air makes my head rather dense. However, I'll look into my brain and see if I can dig it up."

He began to work at the top of his head, and in a moment the whole upper part of his skull revolved. Then he unscrewed it and held it up in his hands. I saw that within it were many small compartments, each filled with tiny crystal beads. He moved them about. They flashed in the sunshine like diamonds. They seemed to hold together like a lot of bubbles, but were hard and firm.

Then he saw my astonishment and placed one of the tiny bubbles in my hand. It was something like a particle of tapioca when partly soaked in water, but not so sticky. He said:

"Don't drop it, for it contains all my ideas on the preparing and cooking of the ordinary rocks, which form very good, plain food, but which our people are inclined to disregard. Each one of those globules contains an enormous number of ideas, thoughts and memories."

"Is it possible?" I exclaimed, in amazement.

"Yes. All thoughts of a kind are contained in a particle of brain-matter, and it can hold an awful number. Perhaps a million ideas. Ah, here's the one I'm looking for, filled with some advanced notions. I assure you. I now recall what it was. Stithpic acid, we call it, and it is the greatest stuff you ever heard of. One drop of it, placed in your cylinder, will explode eighty million times before it is exhausted."

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"Why, that means a new method," I said. "How can I get stithpic acid?"

Scomanx took a cupful of water and a bit of cotton rag, but what else he did I can't explain, for I couldn't understand his action, but he suddenly said:

"Ah, here we are!" and squeezed a drop of yellow fluid upon my hand, at which I gazed curiously.

"It is already exploding furiously," said Scomanx, "but as it is in free air you can't see it."

"I can feel a sort of sensation!" I remarked.

"Don't close your hand, or it will be blown off!" he said, sharply. "Now I'll force a drop of it into your engine by means of my tubular finger, and you'll see what it can do."

In another instant the engine of the Rambillicus was at work and the wheel revolving with a speed far beyond anything it had ever accomplished. I was lost in wonder and delight. Scomanx explained how I could extract the acid from sea-water, and I

knew that my fortune was made! When I wrote down what he told me he laughed, saying:

"I have heard that once, ages ago, we used to do that. Now we merely deposit a record in our brain and save all that trouble."

"But don't you ever forget?" I asked.

"Can't. All we have to do is to look it up. We sometimes lose our memories by people not returning them."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, we often lend an idea or a thought, you see. In fact, sometimes we exchange brains entirely. A fellow wants to have a musical brain, or a poet's, and he borrows it for a time from another. If I had to compose an after-dinner speech I'd borrow the brain of a well-known, clever speaker, and when he wished to make a machine or fix a clock he perhaps would ask for the loan of mine, for I am one of the very first inventors in Sirius. In fact, I suppose I'm the most advanced man there, which explains why I am here on your earth. All the others were too old-foggy to make the journey!"

"How long did it take?" I inquired.

"Twenty-five years as you count time. This I know because I have a tempus-fugittor, or time-measurer, in my chest pocket."

"I should think you would have died from want of air!" I cried.

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"Pooh! We don't breathe as you do! If you'll look into my chest through this little window you'll see that I have no lungs. Air is unnecessary to a Sirusite, let me tell you."

"There's Protogobus in this air of yours!" he added, waving a finger aloft. "I can smell it!"

"What is that?" I asked.

"Protogobus is the stuff that everything else starts with, we think. With it we do most everything from feeding sickly babies to painting roofs. It's wonderful stuff, even to us. We have used it for perhaps twenty thousand years, yet we are constantly finding out something new about it. It is what makes the 'Attraction of gravitation' and causes things to fall toward the earth, but I can't tell you why."

"I didn't notice that you had any stomach," said Sammy, to whom a stomach is perhaps the most important thing on earth.

"No; we have no stomachs; at least, not like yours. You see, we don't have to digest our food, nor, in fact, cook it, as you do. We place it in a receptacle here, and we cook it at the same time that it is absorbed into the system, thus saving both time and labor."

"But I wish to see your people and your homes!" continued our guest. So we rapidly ran home. There Scomanx met everybody I knew and found much entertainment, while he marvelled continually at our old-fashioned ways and methods.

On the other hand, we were all much amused at his peculiar habits and methods. When he removed all of his finger tools or unscrewed his eyes or took out his brain to seek for a half-forgotten memory, we all laughed and some of us shuddered.

Well, the strange visitor, while he enjoyed sojourning among us, finally felt a victim to the most common ailment that afflicts mankind! While he admired many of our qualities and loved many of us, he most particularly admired the hair of the women, for hair is unknown in his star. He never could refrain from praising the tresses of the girls, and to be allowed to feel their hair threw him into an ecstasy.

One day he met Maud Rogers, the most beautiful and accomplished girl in our town, although some people thought she was too well educated and too studious for any use because she was too inclined to look upon all frivolous things as utterly senseless, and gave herself entirely to astronomy, chemistry, osteology and the like.

Scomanx, after that, could see nobody else! He haunted all the places where he might meet Maud, and when in her presence he was in a maze of delight. Miss Rogers, flattered and pleased with the attentions of the man from Sirius, disregarded the warnings of her friends and before she knew it had

fallen completely in love with him, although people said they couldn't imagine what she could see in that uncouth creature.

One day he said to me, with an expression on his face that was new:

"I have a wonderful sensation that I suppose is what you folks mean when you speak of having a pain, but as I never had a pain, I cannot tell. It is right in my heart, and really I guess I might say it hurts, although to me it sounds very funny!"

"Bless my soul!" I exclaimed. "Is it possible that you people have hearts! I never would have thought it!"

"Alas, yes! We have been paying so much attention to Science and Art that we have neglected the heart, and now mine is having its revenge. Something has gotten into it, some painful germ, I suppose, and when I examine it I find it badly inflamed and beating very fiercely!"

"Can you see anything in it?" I asked, smiling, for I knew what ailed him.

"No. When I examine it with my photoscrutine, an instrument we use to detect the smallest, almost invisible object, I can see nothing but a sort of picture there."

"Ah!" said I. "A small picture of Miss Rogers!"

"Yes! But tell me, how did you discover that?"

"You are in love!" said I. "It's a common enough trouble among us, but I never suspected that it would attack a man from Sirius!"

"What does it mean?" he asked, trembling. "Am I going to devour that dear girl? Is that what you do? I seem to wish to do it!"

"No, you will probably ask her to marry you, and take her with you up to your starry home, if she consents. But don't you know whether she loves you or not?"

"Alas, I can't read the thoughts of a woman, I find!" said Scomanx, mournfully.

"Neither can anybody else!" said I. "But you'd better ask her at once, before her people persuade her to change her mind."

"I didn't know you could do that!" he said.

"A woman can do it in a twinkling!" I responded. "Better get at it at once!"

So he hastened away, and that day she promised to marry him; but, just as I expected, her folks made such a fuss that they had to elope, and they did it in my launch Rambillicus, stealing out at dawn one morning to where the caloea lay among the meadow grasses and in some unknown manner contriving to pack themselves away inside of it and leave this world of ours.

I received an astonishing message a few days later, in a tiny ball of some unknown metal of which the caloea was constructed, which suddenly fell upon my writing table. When I opened it there was a scroll of tiny silver, upon which was written:

To Walt McDougall, Atlantic City, N. J.:

"We arrived a short time since in Sirius, and it is heavenly! I am very happy, and Scomanx is the dearest man! Tell my family and all inquiring friends that I am very, very happy, and that we will return in December for a short visit to the Earth."

"Very sincerely yours,

"MAUD SCOMANX."

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Now, while I go shooting hither and thither across the bays in the launch that is propelled at lightning speed by stithpic acid, with Sammy minding the engine, I keep a sharp lookout for another of the wonderful projectiles to come darting down into the water. It will come, for one visit to this world will not satisfy Scomanx. Besides, I know well enough that pretty soon Maud will want to see her mother. Meanwhile, I am selling this wonderful explosive acid at the rate of a thousand dollars per pint and getting richer every day. If you happen to see the Rambillicus just simply scooting across the water at Atlantic City, you may tell your friends exactly what makes her the fastest boat in all the world; but next year, I will build one that will go so fast that you can't see her until she stops!

WALT McDUGALL.